

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

CHAPTER 61

Statutory Authority: S.C. Code Section 48-1-10 *et seq.*

Notice of Drafting:

The Department of Health and Environmental Control (Department) is proposing to amend R.61-62, *Air Pollution Control Regulations and Standards* and the South Carolina State Implementation Plan. Interested persons are invited to present their views and/or interest in writing to Heather Preston, Bureau of Air Quality, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201. To be considered, comments must be received by Monday, September 23, 2002, the close of the drafting comment period.

Synopsis:

On July 18, 1997, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone from 0.12 parts per million (ppm) 1-hour “peak” standard to 0.08 ppm 8-hour “average” standard. This new standard is commonly referred to as the 8-hour ozone standard. Currently, all areas of South Carolina are “in attainment” with all national ambient air quality standards, including the one hour ozone standard. However, when implemented, the 8-hour ozone standard could result in numerous areas of the state being determined not to meet the 8-hour standard and being designated as “non-attainment” for ground-level ozone. When the non-attainment designation occurs, the state must recommend to EPA the boundaries of the areas that are not in compliance with the ground-level ozone standard and must submit a plan to EPA that demonstrates how the state will bring those areas designated as non-attainment for the standard back into attainment. Also, when non-attainment designations occur, areas are subject to general and transportation conformity and new source review requirements.

It is not clear yet when EPA will make the 8-hour ozone non-attainment designations, but in an effort to be proactive, the Department would like to begin the process with state and local governments, industry, environmental groups, and other interested parties to consider possible ozone reduction strategies. The Department would like to work with these groups to develop a strategy sooner than would be required by the current federal timeframes to reduce the pollution that creates ground-level ozone. The most important reasons for moving forward in this proactive manner are the public health benefits realized by meeting the new standard sooner than required and also the deferral of the effective date of a non-attainment designation.

While the Department is interested in pursuing an early action plan for ground-level ozone, it is recognized that developing the technical requirements necessary to create an approvable plan to submit to EPA under the tight timeframes involved may be a difficult task. However, the public health benefits derived from early actions warrant moving forward with this effort at this time.

If you are interested in participating in this process, please provide that interest in writing to the Department as outlined above.